



STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES REGULAR MEETING MAY 9, 2012**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Sean Kelly, David Hurley (arrived at 7:13) and Alternates Gilbert Gamboa and Stefanie Cunningham

**ABSENT:** Vice Chairman Chris Todd, Charles McCleary and Stanislav Moline

### **STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Agent/Zoning Official, Robert Tedford, Director of Parks & Recreation and Kristin Michaud, Recording Secretary

### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Kelly called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE**

### **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Visit from Rise Above, 9th - 12th grade high school students, regarding their interest to conduct a Business Expo.

Robert Tedford, Director of Parks & Recreation, opened the dialog with the Commission explaining that Rise Above is made up of 100+ kids from the community and that organizing a business expo is an opportunity to help foster, build and create leadership skills for them with adult support. He noted that they are looking to put on a low key business expo to acknowledge Ellington businesses. It is not anticipated to be a huge venue, but something to help get direction and support.

Kathy Larew, Co-Advisor, Kevin Arbeiter and Ali Larew were in attendance to represent Rise Above. Ms. Larew explained that Rise Above provides constructive activities for interested youths and alternatives to the party scene. Rise Above provides activities and events for the school and community. They work with Youth Services although they are not affiliated with the Ellington school system. She then gave more details to how the group is run and what they have accomplished in the past.

The Commission wanted clarification regarding the outcome of this and what the objective was.

Ms. Larew explained that it gives the kids a chance to plan and run the event with adult supervision.

Chairman Kelly noted that the businesses would be wondering what is in it for them. He referred to connecting local farmers to local businesses as an example.

Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner/Wetlands Agent/Zoning Official, asked who the main crowd would be. Ms. Larew stated that it would be for the community, not just businesses. Ms. Larew also noted that the kids are constantly looking for things to do and this was a way to support the businesses that have supported them. She is looking for a date sometime in November.

Ms. Houlihan noted that an event like this is beneficial to the community, Rise Above and the businesses. She also suggested they contact the Farmer's Market for involvement.

Chairman Kelly expressed support for the Rise Above initiative.

Ms. Houlihan reviewed the business survey results and what takes place during the business visits.

Mr. Tedford stated that when they have formulated a plan they will attend another meeting and stated that they are thinking of a private location for the event.

#### **NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

2. Report: Tax Abatement - Draft letter to the Board of Selectmen dated, April 22, 2012, from Sean Kelly, Economic Development Chairman. (Response to Selectman Leo Miller re: Kloter Farms Tax Abatement)

Chairman Kelly reviewed the draft letter to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) with the Commission. The Commission agreed that it was a well written letter and answered all the questions and concerns from Selectman Miller.

Ms. Houlihan reviewed the past approved abatements and shared Robert Phillips, Town Planner, thoughts which questioned whether an abatement policy works in Ellington.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of having a tax abatement policy and the approval for Kloter Farms.

Noting the copies of other towns' abatement programs that were received in the Planning Department and shared with the Commission, Ms. Houlihan suggested that each commissioner review one policy for discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Hurley discussed some of the controversy surrounding the EDC and the abatements.

Chairman Kelly requested that the commission be given an electronic copy of the policy for review so that they could discuss potential changes to it or whether or not to get rid of the program.

**BY CONSENSUS THE COMMISSION ENDORSED THE DRAFT LETTER FOR FORWARDING TO THE BOS WITH THE REVISIONS RECOMMENDED BY CHAIRMAN KELLY.**

#### **IV.UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

Chairman Kelly reviewed what happened at the BOS meeting on April 23, 2012 regarding the abatement for farm buildings. He stated that at this point he cannot tell the Commission if the BOS had even made a decision regarding this and they did not set a date to vote on this topic. He assumes maybe the next meeting.

Ms. Houlihan noted that the Town Assessor will be retiring and is unsure what will happen to this proposal when the new person comes in.

**NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

2. Report: Business Surveys and Site Visits

Ms. Houlihan stated that they went on two visits this month. The first visit was with Commissioner Hurley to Ellington Ridge Country Club. Commissioner Hurley reviewed how the site visit went with the Commission. The second visit was with DZEN Garden Market and Commissioner Todd had attended with her. He was not in attendance tonight so she reviewed how that visit went. She also noted that the next visit was to Country Pure Foods with Representative Davis and asked if any of the Commissioner's present would like to attend.

Ms. Houlihan also noted that thus far the Commission has been on about 10 visits. She asked the Commission what businesses they would like to target next either the next few on the survey list or the tax payer list. It was agreed to take three from each list.

**NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

3. Report: Business Directory/Virtual Welcome Wagon

Ms. Houlihan noted that this was on hold until the outcome of the budget.

**NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

4. Report: Tax Incentive Programs

Nothing to report on this topic.

**NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

5. Report: Current Economic Activity

Ms. Houlihan stated that Dania Food Mart moved into Meadowview Plaza. Liquor World opened in the Big Y plaza and after approvals a Nail Salon will be located there as well. She also mentioned a new nail salon at 5 corners and the A-1 Snowplowing and Landscaping open on the Corner of Jobs Hill Road and Maple Street.

**NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

**V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Approval of the April 11, 2012, regular meeting minutes.

**MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (GAMBOA) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE APRIL 11, 2012, MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

2. Correspondence:

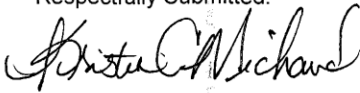
- a. Letter to Sean Kelly, Chairman, Economic Development Commission, dated May 1, 2012. (Support Letter – CT Natural Gas)

**SO NOTED**

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (GAMBOA) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:42P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin Michaud". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristin" and last name "Michaud" clearly distinguishable.

Kristin Michaud  
Recording Secretary